

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-02 /005 R

66604

DRAFTED BY IO/HDC:LNC AVANAUGH:NVB

10/18/73 EXT. 21534

APPROVED BY IO/HDC:EPNOZIGLIA

EA/TB:LSTERMER (PHONE)

----- 023997

R 182301Z OCT 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 207025

FOR GOUGH INFO

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO VIENTIANE PHNOM PENH SAIGON
RANGOON KUALA LUMPUR MANILA JAKARTA TAIPEI SINGAPORE PARIS
CANBERRA WELLINGTON KATHMANDU CHIANG MAI UDORN SONGKHLA
CINCPAC DIA USSAG NKP 13TH ADVON UDORN FROM BANGKOK
17 OCT 73:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16271

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, TH

SUBJ: PROBLEMS FACING THE SANYA GOVERNMENT

THE MAJOR PROBLEMS

THE MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS FACING THE SANYA GOVERNMENT
CONCERN RESTORING LAW AND ORDER IN BANGKOK AND REVIVING
THE SHATTERED MORALE OF ALL BRANCHES OF THE BANGKOK
POLICE FORCES. IT MUST ALSO TAKE HOLD OF THE ADMINIS-
TRATIVE REINS OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH INVOLVES FILLING AN
AS YET INCALCULABLE POWER VACUUM LEFT BY THE
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ABRUPT DEPARTURE OF TWO MEN WHO HAD FOR YEARS MADE PER-
SONALLY EVERY MAJOR DECISION IN THE RTG AND MANY MINOR
DECISIONS AS WELL. ALSO IT MUST INSURE THE MOST RAPID
POSSIBLE RETURN TO NORMAL DAILY COMMERCE. BEYOND THIS IT

MUST MOVE QUICKLY TO INSURE MILITARY, PARTICULARLY ARMY, SUPPORT WITHOUT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MOST CERTAINLY CANNOT SURVIVE.

2. SLIGHTLY LONGER RANGE CONCERNS INCLUDE DEALING BETTER THAN THE THANOM GOVERNMENT WAS ABLE TO DO WITH LARGE AND INTRACTIBLE INHERITED PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY INFLATION, LABOR UNREST, POOR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN MANY SECTORS AND CORRUPTION. AT THE SAME TIME THE SANYA GOVERNMENT MUST MEET THE DEMONCRATIC ASPIRATIONS OF THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL AND THE STUDENTS IN PARTICULAR. EQUALLY IMPORTANT WILL BE THE RESTORATION OF BOTH THE THAI AND THE FOREIGN BUSINESS COMMUNITIES' CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE PRESS HAS ALREADY INDULGED IN THE ENTERTAINING SPECULATION THAT CHINESE BUSINESSMEN ARE IN DISARRAY BECAUSE SOME OF THE POLITICIANS THEY HAVE PAID OFF TO EASE THEIR TRANS-ACTIONS HAVE LEFT COUNTRY.

3. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WORK COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION PROMISED WITHIN SIX MONTHS AND ON ORGANIZING POLITICAL PARTIES AND PREPARING FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS WHICH WILL BE EXPECTED SHORTLY AFTER THE CONSTITUTION'S PROMULGATION.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING

4. PRIME MINISTER SANYA HAS MOVED QUITE RAPIDLY TO APPOINT AND SWEAR IN A NEW CABINET. ON OCTOBER 17 HE ANNOUNCED HIS SELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTION DRAFTING COMMITTEE WHO WILL SELECT HIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITHIN A WEEK. HE ALSO APPOINTED A HIGHLY CAPABLE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE. SANYA PLANS TO ADDRESS THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY JRON MAJOR GOVERNMENT POLICIES EITHER THIS WEEK OR NEXT.

5. LAW AND ORDER SEEM TO HAVE RETURNED WILLINGLY TO BANGKOK. THOUGH THE POLICE ARE NOT YET BACK TO NORMAL, THE NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL, LT. GEN. PRACHUAB SUNTHARANGKUL
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APPEARS TO BE DOING ALL HE CAN TO ASSESS THE DAMAGES THE POLICE HAVE SUFFERED AND TO REMARSHAL HIS FORCES. IN THE MEANTIME, THE THAI BOY SCOUTS ARE DIRECTING TRAFFIC, A CONTRIBUTION THE IMPORTANCE OF WHICH IS ENHANCED BY THE WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS IN AREAS WHERE MOBS HAD GATHERED. STUDENT MONITORS HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE METROPOLITAN POLICE STATION TO SMOOTH RELATIONS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC.

6. ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT SIVARA IS SUPPORTING THE NEW GOVERNMENT FULLY. THERE IS NO REASONS TO EXPECT THAT THIS SUPPORT WILL ABATE ANY TIME SOON, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW LONG THE

MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AS A WHOLE WILL BE WILLING TO STRIKE AN EVEN BALANCE WITH A LARGELY CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY IF THE MILITARY'S DESIRES SEEM TO RUN COUNTER TO WHAT IT PERCEIVES TO BE THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES.

7. SANYA HAS MADE A BRAVE START ON ATTACKING CORRUPTION BY APPOINTING MANY CABINET MINISTERS OF UNIMPEACHABLE REPUTATIONS FOR PERSONAL INTEGRITY, DESPITE THEIR LACK OF LUSTER IN SOME CASES. HOWEVER, IT WILL BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIS GOVERNMENT TO ATTACK BOTH THE MAJOR CAUSES AND THE MAJOR INSTANCES OF CORRUPTION WITHOUT DISMANTLING AN ENTIRE ESTABLISHED ORDER AND SEVERELY THREATENING POWERFUL VESTED INTERESTS IN THE PROCESS. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THESE PRIMARILY MILITARY AND BUSINESS INTERESTS HAVE THE CAPABILITY, AND IN A CRUNCH PROBABLY THE WILL, TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM ANY MAJOR INROADS. THIS SITUATION IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT THAI GOVT SALARIES ARE INADEQUATE AND THE GOVT LACKS THE RESOURCES TO RAISE THEM SIGNIFICANTLY AT PRESENT.

8. SANYA APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANT ROLE THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) PLAYED IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES GIVING BIRTH TO HIS GOVERNMENT. HE HAS ARRANGED TO GIVE THE NSCT OFFICES IN THE TOURIST ORGANIZATION OF THAILAND BUILDING AND GIVES EVERY INDICATION OF REALIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCEDING TO STUDENT DEMANDS WMW INTERESTS. SOONER RATHER THAN LATER THE STUDENTS' CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPECTATIONS WILL COME FACE TO FACE WITH THE NEEDS AND DEMANDS OF OTHER POLITICALLY POWERFUL GROUPS, MOST NOTABLY THE MILITARY. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, SANYA WILL BE IN THE UNENVIABLE POSITION OF HAVING TO CONVINCE BOTH SIDES, AND ESPECIALLY THE MORE EXTREMIST STUDENTS, THAT THE DEMOCRACY OF WHICH THEY SPEAK MUST PERFORCE MAKE ROOM FOR THE OTHER PERSON'S VIEWS AS WELL.

COMMENT

9. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS CERTAIN ASSETS TO COMMENCE WITH, BUT IT WILL BE HARD GOING TO OVERCOME THE PAST. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE BECAUSE, AS A CARETAKER, THE GOVERNMENT IS BY DEFINITION A LAME DUCK WHICH WILL ENCOUNTER STIFF RESISTANCE TO ANY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES THAT WOULD OUTLIVE ITS MANDATE. CRITICAL TO SUCCESS WILL BE THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S CONCEPTION OF ITS MISSION AND ITS RESOLVE IN CONDUCTING THE REFORMATION. AS A START, IT WILL RECEIVE THE BACKING OF MORE THAN JUST THE STUDENTS WHO PRECIPITATED THE REVOLT. THERE ARE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CITIZENS WHO SYMPATHIZED WITH AND SUPPORTED THE STUDENTS YET LACKED THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT THE

PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE STUDENTS TOOK TO THE STREETS.

10. THE REMOVAL FROM THE SCENE OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT AS PERSONIFIED BY THANOM AND PRAPHAT, PLUS THE PROMISE OF A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES AND ELECTIONS, BRINGS WITH IT A DIVIDEND OF INITIAL GOOD WILL. GIVEN THE WIDESPREAD HORROR OVER THE BLOODSHED AND DESTRUCTION, THE NEW GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE A REASONABLE PERIOD OF GRACE NOT ONLY FROM THE STUDENTS AND GENERAL POPULATION BUT ALSO A MEASURE OF RESTRAINT FROM ANY IMMEDIATE MILITARY REACTION TO CIVILIAN RULE.

11. THE ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED AND REASONABLY WELL QUALIFIED CIVIL SERVICE SHOULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO EASING THE GOVERNMENT TRANSITION.

12. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, VIRTUALLY EVERYBODY IN THAILAND, INCLUDING THE MILITARY, WANT THE SANYA GOVERNMENT TO SUCCEED--AT LEAST FOR NOW. ON IT
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RIDES NOT ONLY THE FUTURE OF WHATEVER WILL EVENTUALLY PASS FOR DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND, BUT ALSO THE CONTINUED POPULARITY AND PRESTIGE OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING WHO HAS EXPOSED HIMSELF MORE THAN EVER BEFORE BY DESCENDING INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA AND NAMING SANYA AS HIS PERSONAL CHOICE FOR PRIME MINISTER.

13. NO ONE CAN PREDICT WITH ACCURACY WHAT THE NEXT SIX MONTHS OR MORE HOLD FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT, OR FOR THAILAND AS A WHOLE. DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISILLUSIONMENT ARE INEVITABLE, BUT THE HOPE AND THE PROMISE IS THAT OUT OF IT ALL WILL EVENTUALLY EMERGE A GOVERNMENT CONSIDERABLY MORE RESPONSIVE, DEMOCRATIC, AND EFFECTIVE THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. UNGER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: willialc
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE207025
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO/HDC:LNCVANAUGH:NVB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731066/abqcejdc.tel
Line Count: 202
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: willialc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05-Oct-2001 by eisnerah>; APPROVED <26-Nov-2001 by willialc>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROBLEMS FACING THE SANYA GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, TH
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005